

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00166 280929Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EB-08 ISO-00 /017 W
-----280952Z 084199 /10
P 271635Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6903
USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NOUAKCHOTT 166
E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: BENC, BTIO, MR
SUBJECT: MAJOR PRODUCT: TENDER FOR EARTH STATIONS, MICROWAVE
LINKS AND TELEPHONE LINK

REF: (A) 76 NOUAKCHOTT 2811, (B) 76 STATE 305213,
(C) STATE 8897, (D) STATE 4899, (E) STATE 15649

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED) WITH ADJOURNMENT OF CONFERENCE
OF UNION AFRICAINE DES POSTES ET TELECOMMUNICATIONS (AT
EXPERT THEN MINISTERIAL LEVEL), EMBASSY COMMERCIAL OFFICER
HAS AT LAST BEEN ABLE TO SECURE AN APPOINTMENT WITH GIRM
DIRECTOR OF OFFICE DESPOSTES ET TELECOMMUNICATIONS.
(PERIOD OF "CRASH" PREPARATIONS FOR AND CONFERENCE ITSELF
PUT DIRECTOR AND HIS ENTIRE STAFF OUT OF REACH FOR OVER
TWO WEEKS). DIRECTOR OPT PROVIDED FOLLOWING INFORMATION
ON COMMUNICATIONS EXPANSION PROJECT (EARTH STATIONS, MICRO-
WAVE LINKS, TELEPHONE SYSTEMS), REF (A) :

A. BIDDING ON COMMUNICATIONS EXPANSION PROJECT,
AS INDICATED IN OPT SPECIFICATION PUBLICATION, WILL CLOSE
APRIL 30, 1977. MAURITANIANS WILL THEREAFTER ANALYZE
AND SELECT COMPANY TO WHICH CONTRACT WILL BE OFFERED
WITHIN SIX MONTH PERIOD. ALTHOUGH GIRM DOES NOT
OBJECT TO SUB-CONTRACTING, ENTIRE EARTH STATION-
MICROWAVE-TELEPHONE PROJECT (WITH ESTIMATED COST OF
24 MILLION US DOLLARS). WILL BE AWARDED TO ONE COMPANY
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WHICH GIRM WILL THEN HOLD ACCOUNTABLE FOR COMPLETION OF
ALL ASPECTS OF PROJECT. TO DATE REQUESTS FOR SPECIFICA-
TIONS PUBLICATION HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM 12 COMPANIES:
TWO AMERICAN FIRMS (OF WHICH HARRIS CORP. IS ONE), GTE
(EUROPE), ITT (EUROPEAN BRANCH), THOMPSON-CSF(FRENCH)9&
-, \$ *84.17*49. '0-, NETHERLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM, AND
WEST GERMANY. ONCE CONTRAP HAS BEEN SIGNED, MAURITANIANS

EXPECT ENTIRE PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED IN ROUGHLY TWO YEARS.

B. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION CONCERNING PROJECT FINANCING, OPT DIRECTOR SAID GIRM HAS ALREADY ON HAND SUFFICIENT CAPITAL TO COVER 50 PERCENT OF PROJECT, BUT HE DECLINED TO SPECIFY SOURCE OF THESE FUNDS. ANOTHER 20 PERCENT OF PROJECT, ACCORDING TO OPT DIRECTOR, WILL BE FINANCED BY MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT. FINANCING FOR REMAINING 30 PERCENT, HOWEVER, IS NEGOTIABLE, AND WILL BE MAJOR FACTOR IN DECIDING WHICH COMPANY RECEIVES CONTRACT. TERMS GIRM IS SEEKING, OPT DIRECTOR CONTINUED, ARE REPAYMENT OF LOAN OVER TEN YEARS FOLLOWING TWO YEAR GRACE PERIOD AFTER COMPLETION OF PROJECT.

C. OPT DIRECTOR INSISTED THAT SPECIFICATIONS PUBLICATION HAD BEEN PREPARED BY HIS MAURITANIAN STAFF WITHOUT OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE (READ FRENCH ADVISORS). HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT NOW PUBLICATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED, GIRM OPT HAS ASKED FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS TO FURTHER STUDY MAURITANIAN COMMUNICATION NEEDS. (END UNCLASSIFIED)

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT OPT DIRECTOR'S CLAIM THAT 50 PCT OF FINANCING FOR PROJECT HAS ALREADY BEEN OBTAINED. IN FACT, KNOWLEDGEABLE MAURITANIAN BUSINESSMAN, WHO IS INTERESTED IN INVESTING IN COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT IF IT IS PARTLY PRIVATELY FINANCED, ASSERTS FLATLY THAT GIRM HAS YET TO RECEIVE ANY FUNDING FOR PROJECT. SAME BUSINESSMAN STATES HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROWS FOR FACT THAT GIRM HAS ALREADY REQUESTED FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT.

3. IT IS POSSIBLE AN AMERICAN FIRM CAN STILL WRESTLE COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT AWAY FROM FRENCH, BUT ONLY IF THAT FIRM IS PREPARED TO MAKE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO GIRM DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WHILE MAKING SIZEABLE PROFIT. COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT IS ONE OF LARGEST HIGHLIGHTS EVER UNDERTAKEN BY GIRM, AND THEY ARE CERTAIN TO FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH FRENCH PARTICIPATION UNLESS AMERICAN FIRM CAN CONVINCE MAURITANIANS THAT AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY, FINANCING MANAGEMENT, AND POST CONSTRUCTION SERVICING ARE MEASURABLY SUPERIOR. AND THAT AMERICAN FIRM IS PREPARED TO STAY THE COURSE, I.E. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE PRESENCE IN MAURITANIA (TECHNICIANS, SPARE PARTS INVENTORIES, AND TRAINING PROGRAMS) FOR 8 TO 10 YEARS. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT IT WOULD SEEM CLEAR THAT IN ORDER TO DO THIS AMERICAN FIRMS WOULD NEED NOT ONLY LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE, BUT ALSO QUALIFIED, FRENCH-SPEAKING AMERICANS ON THE SCENE.

4. REPRESENTATIVE OF HARRIS CORPORATION SPENT THREE
DAYS IN NOUAKCHOTT (JANUARY 25-27)(REF C), EMBASSY COMMERCIAL
OFFICER ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS WITH OPT AND LOCAL
BUSINESSMEN AND AT LASTMINUTE SERVED AS INERPRETER
ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT FOR FRENCH LANGQGGE CAPABILITY,
LACK OF ANY COMMERCIAL TRANSLATION SERVICE, AND TIME
REQUIRED TO LINE UP ONE OAHANDFUL OF PART-TIME, SEMI-
PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS COMBINE TO MAKE EARL
NOTIFICATION OF EMBASSY OF PROJECTED ARRIVAL OF
U.S.BUSINESS REPS MANDATORY (REF E). END LIMITED OFFICIAL
USE)

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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